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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 047871

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FOR ATHERTON

FOL REPEAT TEL AVIV 1412 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO DAMASCUS
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QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR XF IS US
SUBJ: LANDAU (JERUSALEM POST) ARTICLE ON SENIOR SOURCE
BACKGROUNDER

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM FEB 26 ARTICLE BY JERUSALEM
POST DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT DAVID LANDAU ON "SENIOR SOURCE"
BACKGROUNDER REGARDING A) ISRAELI/US POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING ON
"TERMINATION OF STATE OF WAR" AGREEMENTS AND B) PROSPECTS FOR
SYRIAN-INITIATED WAR IN 1976. EMBASSY COMMENT FOLLOWS SEPTEL.

2. BEGIN TEXT. ISRAEL AND THE US ARE BASICALLY IN AGREE-
MENT BOTH ON THE MEANING OF "END OF THE STATE OF WAR" AND ON
THE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WHICH ISRAEL WOULD OFFER TO
ACHIEVE IT, A HIGHLY PLACED SOURCE SAID IN JERUSALEM YESTERDAY.
THIS AGREEMENT WAS REACHED DURING PREMIER RABIN'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON, THE SOURCE SAID, WHEN THE NEW AMERICAN END-OF-WAR
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PAGE 02 STATE 047871

INITIATIVE WAS FIRST MOOTED.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

3. "END OF THE STATE OF WAR" IS UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH ISRAEL AND THE US AS THE "THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL TERMINATION OF THE CONFLICT", THE SOURCE ASSERTED.

4. ISRAEL'S CONCESSIONS TO ACHIEVE IT, BOTH SIDES UNDERSTOOD, WOULD BE LESS THAT(SIC) IT WOULD OFFER FOR FULL PEACE-- AND WOULD BE "SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT" FROM A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES.

5. THE SOURCES SAID THIS MEASURE OF UNDERSTANDING SHOULD BE SEEN AS A SUCCESS FOR PREMIER RABIN. EVER SINCE 1967, ISRAEL AND THE US HAD BEEN AT ODDS NOT ONLY OVER EXTENT TO THE WITHDRAWAL, BUT ALSO OVER THE"NATURE OF THE PEACE". US OFFICIALS HAD TOLD ISRAELI MINISTERS THERE WERE "A HUNDRED DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF PEACE."

6. NOW HOWEVER, THE SOURCE SAID, THERE WAS UNDERSTANDING FOR THE FIRST TIME, ON THE NATURE OF THE END-OF-WAR SETTLEMENT, (WHICH IS ALBEIT LESS THAN PEACE), AND ON THE WITHDRAWAL TO BE EXPECTED FROM ISRAEL TO ACHIEVE IT (ALSO LESS THAN FOR PEACE),

7. ISRAEL AND AMERICAN LEGAL EXPERTS WOULD, HOWEVER, MEET SOON TO EXAMINE THE PRECISE MEANING OF "END OF THE STATE OF WAR", THE SOURCE CONTINUED, "TO AVOID ANY FEAR AT ALL OF MIS-UNDERSTANDING". ONCE THE EXPERTS HAD REACHED AGREEMENT, THE US WOULD FORMALLY BROACH THE IDEA TO THE ARAB STATES--THOUGH INFORMAL US-ARAB DISCUSSIONS WOULD NO DOUBT START MUCH EARLIER.

8. IF THE ARAB RESPONSE WAS THAT FOR AN "END OF THE STATE OF WAR" THEY INSIST ON TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL--THIS WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A POSITIVE ANSWER OF AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR NEGOTIA-TIONS, THE SOURCE STRESSED.

9. "BUT AT LEAST WE SHALL HAVE TRIED. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNFORGIVEABLE TO REJECT THE AMERICAN END-OF-WAR INITIATIVE TO FORBID THEM FROM EVEN PROBING IT WITH THE ARAB STATES".

10. THE PROSPECT OF SYRIA STARTING A WAR DURING 1976 COULD NOT BE RULED OUT, THE SOURCE STRESSED, AND ISRAEL DID NOT WANT TO UNCLASSIFIED

"BE BLAMED" BY THE US IN THAT EVENT, FOR HAVING BEEN INTRANSIGENT WHEN AN END-OF-WAR INITIATIVE WAS PROPOSED.

11. SYRIAN BRINKMANSHIP WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE THROUGH THE UNDOF RENEWAL DATE (MAY 30)-- AND THE VOLATILE DANGERS INHERENT IN THIS WERE OBVIOUS. IF IT HEADED FOR WAR, SYRIA WOULD DOUBTLESS TRY TO DRAG EGYPT AND JORDAN IN WITH HER, THE SOURCE WARNED. EGYPT HERSELF DID NOT SEEM DISPOSED TO LAUNCH

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A WAR DURING THIS YEAR.

12. WHILE THE CABINET HAS DELIBERATELY BEEN AVOIDING A DISCUSSION FOR THE TERRITORIAL RETURN FOR END-OF-WAR "AT THIS PRELIMINARY STAGE, "OBERVERS RECALL THAT ISRAEL OFFERED EGYPT SOME TWO-THIRDS OF SINAI EARLY LAST YEAR (UP TO THE EL-ARISH-BAS MUHAMMAD LINE) IN RETURN FOR AN END-OF-WAR PACT. EGYPT THEN REJECTED THE OFFER, INSISTING ON FULL WITHDRAWAL. A SIMILAR OFFER WOULD SEEM LIKELY NOW, PRESUMABLY WITH PARALLED OFFERS ON THE OTHR FRONTS, OBSERVERS BELIEVE.

13. THE US THIS TIME IS PROPOSING INITIALLY THAT END-OF-WAR NEGOTIATIONS BE HELD WITH ALL THREE CONFRONTATION STATES. WASHINGTON BELIEVES, ACCORDING TO THE HIGH ISRAELI SOURCE, THAT NEITHER EGYPT NOR JORDAN WOULD WANT TO RISK A SEPARATE END-OF-WAR SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. (THUS THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF A SEPARATE "JERICHO AGREEMENT" WITH JORDAN--NEWSPAPER REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING.)

14. THE PACE OF DIPLOMACY IN THE WAKE OF THE NEW US INITIATIVE IS EXPECTED TO BE UNHURRIED AT THIS STAGE. NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR THE EXPECTED VISIT OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND OTHER GOVERNMENT LEGAL MEN TO THE US TO DISCUSS "END OF THE STATE OF WAR."

15. THE HIGH SOURCE SAID IT MIGHT TAKE TWO OR THREE MONTHS FOR ALL THE US-ISRAEL AND US-ARAB "CLARIFICATIONS" TO BE COMPLETED.

16. OBSERVERS THOUGHT THE US WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO SHOW SOME SIGNS OF PROGRESS BEFORE THE UNDOF MANDATE EXPIRY DATE. ALSO, IF PRESIDENT FORD VISITS THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE SPRING AS TENTATIVELY PLANNED, IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO HAVE AN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 STATE 047871

AMERICAN-INSPIRED DIPLOMATIC PROCESS UNDERWAY.

17. OFFICIALLY, BOTH ISRAEL AND THE US CONTINUE TO ASPIRE TO A RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. BUT PRIVATELY OFFICIALS OF BOTH COUNTRIES SAY THEY SEE LITTLE HOPE OF IT, BECAUSE OF THE SYRIAN AND SOVIET INSISTENCE ON PLO PARTICIPATION. END TEXT.
TOON

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